



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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News Release

ICE AGENTS ARREST NINE IN DRUG BUST

Multi-agency effort results in the seizure of 950 kilos of cocaine and 50 grams of heroin

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico— A multi-agency investigative effort has led to the arrest of nine foreign nationals along with the seizure of more than 950 kilograms (2,091 pounds) of cocaine and 50 grams of heroin.

The investigation results were announced jointly today by **H.S. Garcia**, U.S., Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico; **Roberto G. Medina**, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); **Jerome Harris**, Special Agent-in-Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); **Douglas Rudolph**, Commanding Officer, Sector San Juan, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); **Luis Fraticelli**, Special Agent-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI); **Marcelino Borges**, Director of Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP); and **Pedro Toledo**, Superintendent, Puerto Rico Police Department (PRPD).

The cocaine and heroin were discovered January 30 when the HRM Wave Ruler, a British ship with a USCG law enforcement detachment onboard, conducted a routine and random inspection of the Babouth, a Honduran-flagged cargo vessel.

The Babouth was escorted to the Port of San Juan due to inclement weather that prevented the completion of the inspection on the high seas. The USCG Cutter Shamel, a 179-foot patrol vessel, escorted the ship to safety.

ICE and other federal agents boarded the Babouth to conduct a more thorough inspection and discovered several bales that tested positive for cocaine and heroin.

Federal agents arrested nine crewmembers from the following countries: Colombia, Peru, Haiti, Chile and Tanzania. They are currently in ICE custody.

The seized cocaine has a street value estimated to range from \$12–22 million, depending on its purity. The seized heroin has an approximate street value of \$2,500–\$3,000.

“This effort illustrates the commitment of federal and local law enforcement agencies alike to fighting criminal activity wherever it occurs,” said ICE’s Medina. “Today, thanks to the diligent efforts of all the agencies involved in this operation, we prevented millions of dollars worth of

dangerous drugs from reaching the streets of Puerto Rico. Our message is clear: We will work together to put a stop to drug smugglers who threaten the safety of our communities.”

Since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2005 in October, ICE agents have seized more than 1,525 pounds of cocaine and more than 20 pounds of heroin. Total seizures for the previous fiscal year included 21,983 pounds of cocaine and 118.8 pounds of heroin.

The U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico has accepted this case for prosecution. The charges contained in the complaints are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.